

To: Fritz, Matthew[Fritz.Matthew@epa.gov]
From: Enck, Judith
Sent: Mon 3/14/2016 6:59:14 PM
Subject: FW: News Clips (PFOA)

Hi matt: see below. Governor Cuomo and his commissioners continue to make inaccurate statements about epa's role in the pfoa situation in Hoosick Falls. I spoke to the Health commissioner last week and he understands what the accurate portrayal is but they continue to get this wrong.

EPA has had a non regulatory health advisory of 400 ppt for pfoa in drinking water for many years. In the summer of 2015, the NYS Dept of Health conducted water samples on the Hoosick Falls public water supply and found PFOA levels at over 600 ppt in 4 of the 5 samples. EPA had numerous phone calls with the NYS Dept of Health about the exceedences and urged them to advise residents not to drink the water. The nys number is 50,000 ppt. The state health department said since the number was simply advisory and a large margin of safety was built in, they would decline to utilize the existing epa number of 400 ppt. so, it's not that there wasn't a clear number. It's that the state health department decided not to rely upon it.

We are receiving numerous press call on this and are declining comment

When you get a moment, please give me a call to discuss. 212 637 5050 thanks

From: Rodriguez, Elias **On Behalf Of** Region2 PAD News
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2016 8:35 AM
To: R2 EPA Region 2 (EPA Staff) <R2_EPA_Region_2_EPA_Staff@epa.gov>
Subject: News Clips (PFOA)

NYT: Pollutant Is Removed From Water in Hoosick Falls, N.Y., Cuomo Says

By JESSE McKINLEY

MARCH 13, 2016

Photo The Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics plant in Hoosick Falls, N.Y. State officials have linked the PFOA in Hoosick Falls to the factory, where the chemical was once used in making Teflon products. Credit Mike Groll/Associated Press

HOOSICK FALLS, N.Y. — More than six weeks after declaring an environmental emergency in this upstate village, Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo made his first visit here on Sunday, announcing that a new filter system had successfully cleared a toxic chemical known as PFOA from the municipal water supply.

"The PFOA is out of the water," Mr. Cuomo, a Democrat, said at a command center set up by the Department of Environmental Conservation. "Today is good news," he added.

Despite Mr. Cuomo's optimistic proclamations, state officials — including the governor's office — were still warning residents not to use tap water for drinking or cooking until a full flush of the local water system had been completed.

Such precautions have become commonplace in Hoosick Falls and surrounding areas since late last year, when federal officials warned the village that its water, which is drawn from municipal wells, contained unsafe levels of perfluorooctanoic acid, a commercial chemical used in manufacturing Teflon and other products.

Since then, the state has scrambled to keep up with a public health scare that ranks as the worst of Mr. Cuomo's five-year-old administration and criticism of the government response, including repeated assertions by the Department of Health and village leaders that the water was safe.

On Sunday, however, the governor defended his reaction and praised the performance of state and local officials. "Congratulations, job well done," Mr. Cuomo said, adding that while work remained, "we've made great progress."

Photo Andrew M. Cuomo Credit Gregg Vigliotti for The New York Times

Mr. Cuomo, who has prided himself on an aggressive response to storms and other disasters, had been chided by some conservative lawmakers for not promptly visiting Hoosick Falls, despite the danger posed by PFOA, which is also known as C-8 and has been linked in studies to cancer, serious pregnancy complications and thyroid disease.

Again, though, the governor said his actions had been appropriate.

"You go personally where you're needed personally," said Mr. Cuomo, who on Saturday had rushed to the scene of a fatal tugboat accident on the Hudson River. He added that while he had seen the new filtering equipment that morning — "It's an attractive filter," he joked — he noted that "my seeing the filter and touching the filter was not all that relevant."

About two dozen residents of Hoosick Falls, a village of some 3,500 people near the Vermont border, came to the command center. And not all were impressed by the state's or the governor's sense of urgency.

"It was 100 days or so: Where was Cuomo?" said Greg Restino, 60, a service manager for a local car dealership who lives near the plant where the pollution is believed to have occurred. "Somebody should have been here."

State officials have linked the PFOA in Hoosick Falls to a factory, Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics, where the chemical was once used in making Teflon products. Since last fall, the company has been paying for bottled water for residents and also funded the temporary water filtration system that the governor talked about on Sunday.

After his announcement, Mr. Cuomo met privately with some residents and promised continued, long-term action on the village's water problems. Several permanent solutions are being considered, including using water from the Hoosic River — which cuts through the village — or increasing the capacity of a village well where the measured levels of PFOA are low. State officials are also considering using a reservoir about 12 miles away, though Mr. Cuomo

suggested that costly option was less likely.

In his public remarks on Sunday, Mr. Cuomo again seemed to fault federal officials for not setting long-term guidelines for PFOA, though the Environmental Protection Agency had issued a short-term advisory in 2009 putting the safe level for the chemical at 400 parts per trillion. Shortly after the state acted in January, declaring the Saint-Gobain plant a Superfund site, the federal agency recommended an even lower level: 100 parts per trillion.

Photo A well that provides water for the village of Hoosick Falls, N.Y., in February 2016. The village's wells were contaminated with a chemical known as PFOA. Credit Nathaniel Brooks for The New York Times

And indeed, the E.P.A. is due to set a long-term level this spring, something Mr. Cuomo and the governors of Vermont and New Hampshire — two nearby states where water tainted with PFOA has also been found — recently reiterated the need for. “We think the E.P.A. should set a number, and whatever that number is we’ll follow,” Mr. Cuomo said on Sunday. “But we need the number.”

Still, Mr. Cuomo cautioned that the state's residents should anticipate the discovery of PFOA and other chemicals in the drinking water of other locations. “We’re going to continue to find situations like this all throughout the state, all throughout the country,” he said, noting that past methods of disposing of toxic chemicals were not always prudent. “Now, in many ways, we’re paying the price as a society.”

Marianne Zwicklbauer, 55, who lives in Hoosick Falls with her husband and two children, said she was appreciative of the governor's visit, but wanted more action from the state.

“The state shouldn’t have been blindsided by this because the E.P.A. has known about it for years,” she said, adding that she had also been disappointed by the federal response. “I would like to be proud of the State of New York. And they have the opportunity to be great on this.”

The governor seemed sympathetic to those living in Hoosick Falls. “If I had a family here, and my kids were drinking the water, I would be frightened,” he said. “The hyperbole, the confusion, the shifting facts, would frighten me,” he said, adding, “that’s why we’ve worked very hard to say we’re doing everything we can do.”

The state hopes to have the new system delivering clean tap water by next week. In the meantime, however, local officials said they were confident that Hoosick Falls would recover.

“We’re not closing up shop and going anywhere,” the town supervisor, Mark Surdam, said. “This problem will be fixed.”

Times Union

Cuomo organizes last-minute trip to Hoosick Falls for PFOA update

Communities across N.Y. facing issue of water contamination, governor says

By Lauren Stanforth and Matthew Hamilton

Updated 7:45 am, Monday, March 14, 2016

Gov. Andrew Cuomo holds press conference in Hoosick Falls Sunday, March 13, 2016.
(Matthew Hamilton)

Gov. Andrew Cuomo made a hastily organized first visit to this tiny community beleaguered by water contamination Sunday morning — offering a message of confidence on one hand that the problem is getting fixed, while suggesting that such public health crises will become more commonplace statewide.

The governor's office said Saturday night that Cuomo was expected to be in New York City, but then put out a notice about the press conference in Hoosick Falls early Sunday morning. As a result, not many community members were present outside the press briefing held at a state Department of Environmental Conservation-rented command post on Route 7 about 11 a.m. Sunday. The governor's office said Cuomo met with about a dozen Hoosick Falls residents privately after the press conference.

The governor, flanked by Village Mayor David Borge, Town of Hoosick Supervisor Mark Surdam and Republican state Sen. Kathy Marchione of Halfmoon, said the purpose of his visit was to announce that a temporary filtration system on the village's municipal water system was showing no detectable signs of the chemical perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA, which has contaminated the water.

Hoosick Falls water, however, is not able to be consumed until the entire system is flushed with the newly filtered water. State officials said that process is expected to be complete by March 21, and testing of the water will continue.

Cuomo also announced that the companies that have been named as responsible for the chemical contamination, Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics and Honeywell International, will deliver bottled water to residents who cannot physically go to the local Tops supermarket where it is being offered for free. He said residents also will be reimbursed for half of the water bills that they've been expected to pay, up to \$240,000 in total.

But the governor bristled when questioned at the press conference about why he hadn't visited Hoosick Falls since a spotlight was placed on the contamination by concerned citizens and profiled in the first in a series of stories published in the Times Union in December.

PFOA, a chemical used to make non-stick coating and heat-resistant wiring, is a human carcinogen that can cause rare forms of cancer as well as thyroid disease, and can affect developing fetuses. It was a private Hoosick Falls resident, Michael Hickey, whose father died of cancer, who had water tested and found the presence of PFOA in 2014. The chemical has since been revealed to have poisoned wells in the town of Hoosick, the nearby town of Petersburg and the village of North Bennington, Vt., where an old Saint-Gobain plant shut down in 2002.

Governor Cuomo announces PFOA no longer detected in Hoosick Falls water filtration system

By Lindsay Nielsen

Published: March 13, 2016

HOOSICK FALLS, N.Y. (NEWS10) – Crews have been hard at work at the DEC command center flushing out carbon filtration systems that will go into homes in the Village of Hoosick. The governor was there today and News10 asked him some of your questions.

“If I had a family here and my kids were drinking the water, I would be frightened,” said Cuomo.

Governor Andrew Cuomo visited Hoosick Falls for the first time on Saturday and many wondered why it took him so long. Cuomo said he responded to deploying state agencies as soon as he was notified.

During a press conference, Cuomo was asked if he stayed away because of the criticism of those state agencies on how they’ve handled the PFOA water problem.

“Some snarky reporter always finds something to criticize. I think it’s in the job description,” said Cuomo.

“Well looking for the truth yes,” said reporter.

“Or just looking to criticize,” said Cuomo.

The criticism of a slow response by the state has come from those who live in Hoosick Falls and other officials. However, Cuomo said the confusion came because there was no long-term exposure level for PFOA for state agencies to follow.

Cuomo said he is waiting on the EPA to set a regulatory level for PFOA.

“That’s right well we were following the EPA guideline which was 400ppt for short-term exposure. There was no EPA guidance for long-term exposure which then became the question,” said Cuomo.

News10 also asked if the state is trying to protect Saint Gobain or other companies because they signed consent orders saying they would stop using PFOA.

“I can’t speak to that. I wasn’t here but you couldn’t be more aggressive with Saint Gobain than we are being,” said Cuomo.

Cuomo announced Sunday that the temporary water filtration system for the village water supply is working.

“I saw the filter today. It’s an attractive filter. It’s a big filter. It looks good in grey. I don’t know if they come in other colors,” said Cuomo.

People are still being told to NOT drink or cook with the water. People should still drink the bottled water until you are notified by the State Health Department or DEC that the water is safe to drink.

“The state continues to take aggressive action to protect the health and safety of Hoosick Falls residents. We have made good progress with PFOA no longer detected in the village’s water filtration system, and we continue to work diligently to address residual contamination. The state remains in close contact with local officials and key stakeholders to ensure access to clean, drinkable water in Hoosick Falls,” said Governor Cuomo

Politico

Cuomo makes first trip to Hoosick Falls since start of pollution crisis

Governor Cuomo meets with Hoosick Falls mayor Dave Borge. (Office of the Governor of New York)TweetShare on Facebook Print

By Scott Waldman

Mar. 13, 2016

HOOSICK FALLS — Gov. Andrew Cuomo made his first visit to Hoosick Falls on Sunday, about 100 days after the polluted town water supply blew up into one of the most serious public health crises his administration has experienced.

Cuomo, wearing a blue blazer and surrounded by state and local officials in windbreakers, said initial tests of a temporary water filtration system had turned up no PFOA in treated water.

At the press conference, given with just two hours notice, Cuomo credited the handling of the response by his administration and said his employees “performed admirably.”

Cuomo said he would be frightened if he lived in Hoosick Falls and his family had to rely on the water.

“If I’m a resident, get the PFOA out of my water, that’s what I want,” he said. “And I want the PFOA out of my water tomorrow. And by the way, I don’t want to pay to get the PFOA out of my water. And by the way, I don’t want to pay for the water I’ve been using and then have to go get bottled water at a store. That’s what I want, number one. Number two, I want an alternative or a long-term water source where I know I’m not going to have to this problem. Those are the two things I want, and those are the two things we’ve been trying to deliver. And today, we can say we have accomplished step one. These filtration systems will take PFOA out of the water.”

The town is still not able to use its municipal water supply, almost a month after installation began. The system is now being flushed, but there is no definitive timetable for when the water will again be safe to drink.

Cuomo said about 300 treatment systems have been installed on private wells, and those are also not usable at this point. He said the state was awaiting more testing before giving the all-

clear on the drinking water sources.

Cuomo said PFOA, a toxic chemical connected to cancer that is also used in the manufacturing of non-stick products, was one of about 80,000 unregulated chemicals and that he expects the state to handle more and more pollution responses in the coming years. He said the state is now looking at three possible long-term solutions for the town's water issues, including using a well that does not have dangerous levels of PFOA, using the Hoosick River, and the "less probable" option of using a reservoir 12 miles away.

Hoosick Falls residents will not have to pay their water bills for the last six months, Cuomo said. He said they will also not have to pay to maintain the town's PFOA filters, or the filters the state is now installing in private homes. State officials will now deliver bottled water to homebound residents unable to get to the store and who have relied on volunteers for months to bring their daily water rations.

Cuomo said the state will seek to have Saint-Gobain, the France-based company that owns the plastics factory connected to the pollution in Hoosick Falls, pay for the filters and water bills. He said the company has been cooperative thus far, but expects the relationship between the state and Saint-Gobain to become "quite contentious."

The state Department of Health has been aware that there were dangerous levels of PFOA in the water in the municipal water supply for Hoosick Falls since at least 2014, and that it was above the recommended federal level of 400 parts per trillion put in place in 2009. Yet the state DOH didn't warn residents against using the water until December 2015, after the federal Environmental Protection Agency issued a warning not to drink the water.

For weeks, Cuomo has been pressed by reporters at virtually every public event to explain why the state was so slow to react.

He has typically blamed "shifting" safe water standards at the EPA, which has followed a national PFOA safe water guideline of 400 parts per trillion for years. The Region 2 office dropped that to 100 parts per trillion, and federal health studies have been underway for years to help inform a long-term health standard. That long-term PFOA exposure guideline is expected from the EPA within the next few months.

On Sunday, Cuomo repeated that criticism and said he had joined with the governors of Vermont and New Hampshire to press the EPA to release its final guidelines.

"We need a common number for all states for long-term exposure," he said.

Responding to questions about why it took so long for him to arrive in Hoosick Falls, when he has been known to rush to the scene of other disasters — including the location of a tug boat that sunk in the Hudson River on Saturday and killed three people — Cuomo said traveling to Hoosick Falls to look at a water filter was not "relevant" because it would just be to see the installed filter.

When asked if he had stayed away because of criticism, Cuomo pointed to the support of the elected and state officials that his office picked to stand with him at the podium and said their support was an indication that locals were happy with the response of his administration to the crisis. He said reporters were looking to criticize him on anything they could.

"Every situation that deals with an emergency is always criticized, always criticized," he said. "Some snarky reporter always finds something to criticize. I think it's in the job description."

A moment later, he added: "If you were going to stay away from a situation because you were going to be criticized, you would be under your bed as an elected official across the board."

WGRB

Gov. Cuomo inspects water filtration system in Hoosick Falls

By Hubert Wiggins

Sunday, March 13th 2016

HOOSICK FALLS -- Governor Andrew Cuomo made his first trip to Hoosick Falls since his administration declared the village's water unsafe to drink last fall. He began his prepared remarks by saying the Hoosick Falls water contamination is not unique.

"We were in the manufacturing economy. We were making things. We were using chemicals. We allowed waste disposal in fashions that, in retrospect, were not prudent and now, in many ways we are paying the price as a society," Mr. Cuomo said.

The governor inspected the filtration system that was recently connected to the municipal water supply and announced the results of recent testing.

"The temporary filter is installed. They have done the testing. The water that comes out of the temporary filter, the Calgon filter, is what they call non-detect for PFOA. That means the filter works. The filter on the village system works," Mr. Cuomo said.

Governor Cuomo also announced that village residents would receive refunds on their water bills.

"People feel that they are paying their bill for the water system but they can't use the water system and that is unfair. I agree that is unfair. Six months of their cost of water will be covered by the state and I believe should be covered by the company (Saint Gobain) and we are going to put forth a claim against the company," Mr. Cuomo said.

The governor was asked why he did not come to Hoosick Falls sooner. He said he had meetings on the PFOA contamination as soon as he learned about it.

"The question from day one after we identified the chemical, was can you filter the chemical, yes or no, how do we do it, who bears the cost? That was always the question and that was never an on the ground question," Mr. Cuomo said.

The Governor was joined in his inspection of the water filtration system by Hoosick Falls Mayor David Borge, and State Senator Kathleen Marchione.

"I saw the filter today, it's an attractive filter, it's a big filter, it looks good in grey, I don't know if it comes in other colors, I don't know if it has a design look. My seeing the filter and touching it is not all that relevant," Mr. Cuomo said.

Times Union

LeBrun: Hoosick catastrophe no joke

Fred LeBrun

Published 8:20 pm, Saturday, March 12, 2016

When the name of your village sounds like "Who-Sick," and it's got a problem with toxic water, you gain new appreciation for the banana peel. Like it or not, you're going to be the vehicle for a lot of abuse.

So when Comedy Central's "Daily Show" teed off on Hoosick Falls last week in a bit that started by commenting on the lead pollution in Flint, Mich., there was no doubt widespread eyerolling in eastern Rensselaer County when "Who-Sick" came up. Har har. But truth be told, the routine was a good laugh, reasonably respectful of the seriousness of the matter, and stuck a sharp barb where it belonged — at the politicians, state and national, who'd rather be anywhere else if they had a choice.

Which is a reminder that I don't believe Andrew Cuomo has yet visited Hoosick Falls, all of 34 miles by dog sled from the state Capitol, since the PFOA toxic water crisis hit the fan in December. Maybe I missed it.

Although it does stand out that this governor has gone out of his way again and again when Mother Nature was the culprit to visit victims of natural disasters across the state. But when it's bad water his Health Department should have dealt with rather than floods, he's apparently not so eager to visit the scene.

It's fair to suggest that you and I and even the residents of Hoosick Falls would just shrug off the bad pun on national television, but someone as sensitive and caring about the image of the state — not to mention his own — as our governor, might take it far more seriously. The comic bit, after all, is dangerously close to ridicule. And the spectre of the governor of Michigan digging his own political grave over the Flint lead debacle is the stuff of recurring nightmares for presidential wannabes.

So the very next day, a letter goes public from governors Cuomo, Peter Shumlin of Vermont and Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire, formally asking the federal Environmental Protection Agency for "uniform guidance to states that our health and environmental officials can use in assessing the safety of our drinking water" when it comes to perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA. Now, only a suspicious mind would see any connection between the Comedy Central routine and a letter that inferentially suggests the fault for government's pathetically slow and even inappropriate response is somehow the EPA's fault.

As it happens, the EPA has dragged its heels far too long over regulating PFOA, so the governors are right about that. Certainly the federal agency knows full well how dangerous PFOA is since the EPA fined DuPont \$10.25 million in 2005 for hiding its toxicity. Additionally, the EPA crafted an agreement with all the producers and users of the chemistry to stop all production a year ago. So sure, the feds for whatever internal politics haven't set the strict guidance a regulated chemical would bring.

Still, that is a deceptive argument, and in no way prevents New York, or Vermont, or New Hampshire from setting their own legally enforceable, peer-reviewed guidance regulations for what constitutes safe levels of PFOA in drinking water. Maine, New Jersey and North Carolina have done it, and so has Minnesota, where the chemistry originated with the 3-M company. New Jersey is the strictest, with a ceiling of 40 parts per trillion, and even that number is getting an argument as too high by some in the Garden State. A hundred parts per trillion seems to be the ceiling for most of the others.

So when EPA Region Two administrator Judith Enck in January proclaimed a provisional 100 parts per trillion safe limit for long-term use in Hoosick Falls drinking water — which replaced no guidance at all from her agency for long-term use — it was not a figure pulled out of the hat. Interestingly, the letter to the EPA sent by the three wise governors echoed a deliberate confusion uttered earlier by our governor that equated short-term and long-term safety limits, and essentially accused the EPA of switching limits, which left the Health Department looking foolish. The Health Department did look foolish, but that was their own doing. The EPA's established guidance for short-term exposure to PFOA was and is 400 parts per trillion.

Although my hunch is with the widening publicity PFOA is getting, the EPA will come under increasing pressure to formally regulate the compound — even though it is no longer being manufactured in this country — and set a stringent, low safety level for both long and short term exposure.

The letter also conveniently, although not entirely accurately, observes "that PFOA contamination is not a state problem or a regional problem — it's a national problem that requires federal guidelines and a consistent, science-based approach." Actually, it's international, a problem in every corner of the globe. South Korea and Peru, among others, are cited as having significant PFOA issues. Add Germany to the list of governments setting a 100 parts per trillion limit as safe, and others in the industrialized world are bound to follow suit.

So awareness is evolving. With it will come relief. For Hoosick Falls, it's been a long time coming, and we're not there yet. But at least you're in a better place today than you were six months ago, banana peel or no.

Saint-Gobain unveils new website to address PFOA issues

By Nick Fusaro

Published: March 11, 2016

HOOSICK FALLS, N.Y. (NEWS10) – Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics, the company which owns the plastics plant believed to be responsible for the PFOA pollution, has opened a new

website to address this problem.

It has answers to common questions about PFOA, a timeline of plant ownership, and letters to and from state and federal regulations and political leaders.

The company has provided funding for the new water filtration systems in Hoosick Falls.

The website can be seen, <http://www.hoosickwater.com/>

HOOSICK FALLS SCHOOL DISTRICT TO INSTALL FILTER

03/12/2016

Times Union

The Hoosick Falls Central School District announced Friday it is taking preemptive action by installing a carbon filtration system at the end of the month despite no detectable levels of a toxic chemical being found in the school's water supply.

The contaminant perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA, used in the production of non-stick cookware, has been at the center of the water crises in Hoosick Falls and Petersburg as well as North Bennington, Vt., and Merrimack, N.H. Exposure to PFOA has been linked to a number of human maladies, including several forms of cancer.

The school campus is not connected to the municipal water system and pumps water from wells on campus. The wells are tested monthly, with no detectable level of PFOA in the school water supply, the district said.

The state will pay for the filtration system. Installing it requires that the water be shut off in the building, and school will be closed on Thursday, March 24, and Monday, March 28. There is no school on Good Friday, March 25.

The district said it has emergency days available since it has not used any snow days this year.

In nearby Washington County, levels of PFOA in the Cambridge water supply are nearly undetectable, according to village officials.

The water was tested after PFOA was found in nearby communities' water supplies.

Tests in Cambridge revealed a presence of PFOA "magnitudes below the set advisory" by the federal Environmental Protection Agency, the village said.

Anyone with questions may call Mayor Carman Bogle's office at 802-688-3454 or email bogle@cambridgeny.gov or call American Water, 877-426-6999.

The state Department of Environmental Conservation traced the PFOA contamination in Hoosick Falls to the Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics and Honeywell plant sites. In

Petersburgh, the Taconic facility was identified as a PFOA source.

In Hoosick Falls, the EPA's regional office in January set 100 parts per trillion as the safe level for the sort of long-term exposure found in residential use. Nationally, EPA has set 400 ppt as the safe level for short-term exposure.

Taconic Plastics, which operates a plant in the Petersburgh area, agreed last week to pay for a carbon filtration system for the town water supply, which serves about 240 people, according to the state Department of Environmental Conservation. Initial tests by the state detected PFOA, in the town water supply at levels just below the maximum allowable concentration based on EPA guidance levels.

Residents have been receiving free bottled water.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Thursday joined governors Peter Shumlin of Vermont and Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire in formally asking the EPA to "conduct a review of the best available science regarding perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), in order to assess and ensure the safety of drinking water exposed to the contaminant."

Times Argus

State identifies PFOA in almost 30 more wells in North Bennington

March 13, 2016

NORTH BENNINGTON — Testing of private wells in the area near a former manufacturing site has identified almost 30 other wells showing some level of contamination for PFOA, according to Gov. Peter Shumlin.

The first test results showing some contamination from PFOA, or perfluorooctanoic acid, were released on Feb. 25. Since then, the state has been gathering samples from other private wells in the area.

In a press release, Shumlin's office said the results from 34 of those samples were returned on Friday and showed 29 wells had PFOA levels from 38 to 2,270 parts per trillion.

Different states allow different levels of PFOA, a once commonly used chemical, but Vermont's Department of Environmental Conservation has set the acceptable level at 20 parts per trillion.

Most of the results returned on Friday were in the three digits but three wells on Royal Street showed results of 2,270, 1,150 and 647 parts per trillion.

PFOA contamination has not been found in the public water in the village of North Bennington or the town of Bennington.

Studies have linked high levels of PFOA with liver and testicular cancer, high blood pressure and low birth weights, among other health issues.

The state began testing for PFOA in February after the neighboring village of Hoosick Falls, N.Y., found high levels in their municipal water last year.

After finding elevated levels in three private wells, one on Asa Way as high as 2,000 parts per trillion, staff with the DEC began to expand their testing to a 1.5-mile area around the former ChemFab manufacturing plant, which closed in 2002.

The Asa Way well was tested again and showed a result of 2,330 parts per trillion on Friday.

On Saturday, Alyssa Schuren, commissioner of the Vermont DEC, said there was some expectation that the initial results would show contamination. The initial samples taken were closest to the former ChemFab site so there was an expectation that contamination was more likely there.

The state has collected about 185 samples. Results of the tests take about two weeks but once they're in, they should help determine the extent of the contamination.

Schuren said staff from the DEC personally notified the families at the 29 new sites on Saturday. The residents there will also be getting follow-up phone calls from staff at the Vermont Department of Health.

A public meeting has also been scheduled for Wednesday at 6 p.m. at the Village School of North Bennington.

The health department has advised those living within a mile and a half of the former ChemFab site who are using private wells not to drink the water or use it for brushing their teeth, cooking or watering their pets.

Saint-Gobain, the owner of the former ChemFab business, which also operates a plant in Hoosick Falls, has agreed to pay for bottled water, the water tests and filtration systems at the homes where high levels of PFOA have been identified.

Schuren said those filtration systems could be installed as early as this week but state officials are hoping to connect everyone in the village of North Bennington to municipal water as a long-term solution.

Saint-Gobain has also been asked to pay for the extension of the village's municipal water system.

The bottled water paid for by the company is available at the North Bennington Village Variety Store and water tanks, from which residents can draw water, have been placed at the intersection of Water Street and Route 67A.

The state has also begun the process of delivering bottled water to the affected residents.

In the week after PFOA was first found in North Bennington, an information center was set up for a few days at 324 Main St. in Bennington in the building used by the Vermont Department of Health and the Community College of Vermont.

That office was reopened on Saturday and will be open today from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Monday

through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Staff from the health department and DEC will be at the office to answer questions.

Vermont NPR

More North Bennington Wells Show PFOA Contamination

By ALEX KEEFE & HOWARD WEISS-TISMAN

MAR 12, 2016

The Vermont Department of Health opened a PFOA information center in downtown Bennington Saturday after testing revealed widespread contamination among homes near the former Chemfab factory.

Howard Weiss-Tisman / VPR

The first round of water test results from North Bennington are in and they show widespread contamination among homes near the former Chemfab factory.

The state received lab results from 34 private wells late Friday.

Department of Conservation Commissioner Alyssa Schuren says 29 of those tests showed levels of the suspected carcinogen PFOA that were above the acceptable level set by the state.

"When we took the samples, initially we started closest to the former Chemfab facility and we worked out from there," Schuren says. "And so a lot of the initial tests we're getting back are closest to the facility, and so one would expect these to be the highest results. Right now we're working to overlay the test results on a map, but our initial review is showing that we're seeing some of the contamination in every direction."

The PFOA levels in the samples ranged from 38 parts per trillion, to 2,270 parts per trillion.

Schuren says she expects to receive more tests throughout this week, and she says the state will begin testing soil in the area as well.

The Vermont Department of Health considers 20 parts per trillion to be an acceptable amount of PFOA in drinking water, according to the release.

Vermont environmental officials have been racing to test private water wells near the shuttered North Bennington Chemfab plant since late last month, when water tests first revealed PFOA in five private wells. The town's public drinking water supply has been tested and is not affected, the state says. PFOA, or perfluorooctanoic acid, was used to bind protective, waterproof, or non-stick coatings and other chemicals to surfaces.

As of Saturday afternoon, the governor's office said about 185 wells had already been sampled from within a 1.5-mile radius of the former Chemfab plant, which used PFOA to affix protective coatings to cloth. The plant closed in 2002.

Officials with the state Department of Environmental Conservation were going door to door Saturday morning and making phone calls to tell residents about the results, and to answer questions, according to the release. The state will also host a community meeting to discuss the results at 6 p.m. March 16, at the Village School of North Bennington.

The state has also opened a local "information center" at the Vermont Department of Health offices, at 324 Main Street, Bennington. The center is open this weekend from 9 a.m. - 6 p.m., according to the governor's office.

Meanwhile, people affected by the chemical contamination continue to receive deliveries of bottled water, paid for by Saint-Gobain, the company that owned the former Chemfab plant.

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